

I support the petition to retain Morse code as a testing requirement for the General and Extra class licenses.

Many hams are in their early teens when first licensed. Morse code is a great "equalizer" and allows young people to participate in Amateur radio on an equal footing with adults. You cannot tell the age of the person sending code by listening to it, as you can with voice communications. It is rare to hear a 10 or even 15 year old on HF voice. They are often "mike shy" and intimidated by adult operators.

According to ARRL statistics, 42% of amateurs obtained their license at between 10-20 years of age. I suspect that most of these licensees were actually at the lower end of this range when first licensed.

If we eliminate morse code testing we will likely end up retaining fewer teenage Amateurs. Without teenagers entering AND STAYING in the hobby, it will ultimately die.